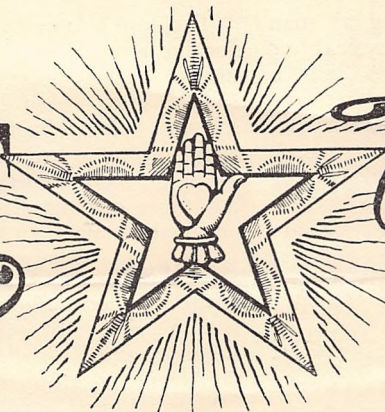


STAR OF THE EAST



A Monthly Journal, devoted to the propagation of the VEDANTA PHILOSOPHY
the Universal Teaching of Souls' Unfoldment.

Volume V.

SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA, MAY, 1910.

Number 11.

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P.O. Box 1064.

SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA.

SUBSCRIPTION, PER YEAR ... 4s. 6d. (\$1.00)

COSMIC EVOLUTION AND ITS PURPOSE.

Lecture by Swami Abhedananda.

All the Scriptures of the world bear testimonies to the fact, that from very ancient times various attempts have been made by the human mind to understand the laws that govern the phenomena in the universe, and to explain the process which nature uses in producing these phenomena.

The poetic and truth-seeking minds of the Vedic Sages soared high above the clouds of ignorance of the Infinite space of eternal truth, when they asked, and answered the question, "Who has seen the first-born?" Who can declare whence this Creation? "Where was the life and blood and soul of the universe?" These questions were asked by the Vedic Sages who lived in prehistoric times, when other nations were in their Infancy, and reading and writing were unknown to all. Schools and colleges were not thought of, and the various instruments which we find to-day in the laboratory of the Scientists, which are considered indispensable for the learning of man at present, were never dreamed of. So far back as this the ancient thinkers and philosophers of India occupied their minds with these questions, and we read in one of the hymns of the Rig Veda, taking us as far back as 5000 years before Christ, the following:—"Before the manifestation of the phenomenal universe, there was neither entity, nor non-entity. Death was not, nor, therefore, Immortality; nor day, and night. The One-ness Breathed breathlessly by itself in the essence. There was nothing to differ from this One-ness, nor go beyond it. From this mighty essence burst forth mighty productive powers, which made nature below and energy above." Rig Veda hymn, No. 129. In the Upanishads it says, "From this undifferentiated Absolute Self evolved gra-

dually vital force, mind, and all sense-powers, ether, heat, and all that is gaseous, liquid and solid."

The etherial particles or atoms began to vibrate, and slowly came into a state of extreme heat caused by attraction and aggregation of matter.

On account of high temperature it is sometimes described as the gaseous state of the material world. When that extreme heat begins to radiate and the ocean of gaseous matter cools off, the gaseous conditions is changed into liquids; and the liquid state being further cooled off by the radiation of heat into space, the particle of matter appears in solid mass. Thus, when the solid mass is yet more cooled off, the germ of life began to manifest on the physical plane, first vegetables, then animals, and lastly human. This is the first description of the principal stages of Cosmic evolution that we find in the Vedic literature. Kapila is supposed by Oriental scholars to have lived as early as the seventh century before Christ, and he is called the "Father of the evolution theory in India," all who came in contact with the Ancient Aryans were more or less influenced by it. Before the sixth century, B.C., all the religious, and philosophical ideas of Pythagoras regarding the Cosmic evolution were current in India.

Kapila, and other philosophers of the ancient times, came to the following conclusions after their researches of the Cosmic phenomena, first, that something cannot come from nothing; second, that the effect lies in the cause, and that the effect is the cause reproduced; and third, that what we call destruction is but the reversion of the effect to its Causal state; and fourth, that the laws of nature are regular and uniform throughout, and that the building up of the Cosmic is the result of the evolution of the Cosmic Energy. These are some of the principal conclusions which Kapila (in particular) came to after experiments and strict following of the rules of inductive logic.

Let us now see what the Hindu philosophers say regarding the purpose of the Cosmic evolution. According to them the great purpose of this evolution is the liberation of the Soul of man from the bondages of matter. That man might become freed from all his ignorance, imperfections, selfishness and other darkness, and that the germ of life hidden in the things with which he deals

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have greater freedom for expansion. As long as man is bound in certain conditions, whether physical or mental, he is not free, and he cannot expand into a greater field of thought and expression; he is therefore bound by the law of evolution to evolve out of the narrowness in which he finds himself at the present time.

The freedom can be acquired by a higher degree of love for the Self in others. The real unselfish love is possible when we realise our true nature, and we are therefore dependent upon the knowledge of our true nature to manifest it. When we understand this, the soul reaches then the plane of spirituality. A man can be moral and not spiritual, but a spiritual man can never become immoral. "He who realises his own divine nature conquers all the stages of evolution, and becomes free to enjoy eternal bliss in this life," says the Bhagavad-Gita.

THE PLANET VENUS: ITS POWER AND ITS ATTRIBUTES.

WHY WE SHOULD DRAW TO US HER VIBRATIONS.

Professor Allan Leo, England's greatest Astrologer, has the following to say of the power, and virtue, of the planet Venus:—

"The benefic planets are Venus and Jupiter, whose rule is concerned with the chief rulers in the objective world. Venus and Jupiter are counterparts of Mars and Saturn, and they should always be considered such in nativities. All the material influence, giving force, energy and strength, is eventually to be transmuted into sympathy, gentleness and charity. The only real difference between these two planets arises from the special vibrations. Mars is attracted from without through desire and impulse. Venus causes all action to come from within, and instead of feeling rushing outwards to objects and becoming captive to externals, it moves from within through the Ego's direct intuitive powers.

The vibrations of Venus directly effects the higher part of the nature of the human soul and the higher mind. In the physical world Venus presides over the sense and touch, which sense is not related to one special part of the body, but the whole. All the distinctly human and refining influences come from the planet Venus, the whole of the tendencies of this planet's vibrations being to centralise and draw in from the objective world the experience needed to awaken the inner and more subjective centres of consciousness. Venus is on the side of will, and the immortal trinity and all vibrations that are assimilated are made permanent soul possessions.

Mars, on the contrary, is on the side of the mortal impermanent, until the force is turned inwards, when it passes into the ray of Venus.

Venus preserves, nourishes, rebuilds, and all who come fully under the influence of this planet are capable of living purely, appreciating beauty and goodness to the full.

It will be necessary to avoid mistaking the vibrations of Mars for those of Venus, also to know which of these two planets has the stronger influence in each nativity. Mars is the planet of physical generation, and its influence is always acting through the senses. Venus is the planet of Creation, ever tending to act through the soul and not through the senses.

The love shown by Venus always sanctifies and makes for harmony through conjugality, friendship, and soul-union. Mars denotes feelings that are personal and selfish, and Venus those that are impersonal and unselfish. The influence of Mars when perverted makes men seek to injure, and never allows them to forget the value of their personal importance. Venus injures one, but those coming directly under its vibrations sink their personal element in other, through love and sympathy.

The influence of Mars causes men to insult and patronise, while those of Venus makes for protection and true charity. In some mysterious manner a ray from Venus touched the life of the animal on its first separation from the group soul (instinctive consciousness). The "Sons of mind" who came from the planet Venus gave to infant humanity its first germ of that true mind, which is in its essence immortal, and through this the period of man's evolution was considerably shortened, for by receiving this divine spark, the seed of the human soul became quickened in the animal man, who otherwise would have spent countless ages in inquiring after that which these beneficent beings in the planet Venus in their love and compassion gave to humanity upon this low earthplane."

HOW TO JUDGE A NATIVITY.

By Allan Leo.

From another great authority we take the following:—"Venus is the 'smaller' fortune; she is the author of mirth and conviviality; she is the queen in the heavens of pleasure, and mistress of refinement; and the Buddhists depict her crowned, riding upon a Bull." The riding upon a bull, which is the symbol of strength, symbolise that she transfers brute-strength into gentleness, refinement, and happiness.

FROM THE ENCYCLOPÆDIA METROPOLITANA

From Ancient Mythology we will take the following:—"Pygmalion, a sculptor-king, fell in love with the ivory statue of a maiden he himself had carved; he prayed to Venus to give it life, and his prayers were answered.

"Venus, the daughter of Jupiter, and Dione, a beautiful goddess and queenly representation of love, was considered one among the highest of the Deities in the heavens. Roses and Doves were sacred to her because her power was to bestow love, and beauty, and gentleness, and refinement to all upon earth." From the Annals of Ancient Mythology.

The testimonials to the planet Venus from the Cabalistic writings are as follows:—"Adonaij, SABAOTH, the home of the God of Hosts, where is the God of triumph, and victory; to Him is given the Pillar, which means eternity. He is love and justice. He acts through the order of Angels known as Principatum. He manifests his love, power, beauty, and, sympathy; through sphearum, Veneri Venusum (Venus); and His Angels are Hamel, and Cernaiul, David's representative." (Ruling planet). Adonaij SABAOTH, means God with the highest evolved attributes, and that this planet is so called shows the estimate which the Cabalists had for its power and high vibrations. We have often heard people, both clairvoyants and others, say that "Venus brings the lower vibrations to us, and that it is in itself lower than our earth!" Such talk shows how very limited they are in both their spiritual and intellectual

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unfoldment. In America I heard a lady "medium" say, "while in trance," that "the planet Venus is the lowest amongst them all."

Since it is to the contrary, I have looked up authorities on the subject, which will prove that it would be of wonderful benefit for us to come closer in contact with the vibrations of this wonderful planet; that we would be influenced far more for the better than to hold on to our little earth all time, and think that it is the highest amongst the heavenly mansions. We can draw these vibrations by sending our thoughts there as often as we can during the day, and also hold strong desires to become all that it represents. The planet Venus gives us our vegetables, acting from her outer vibrations; but acting from her inner she gives us peace, understanding, refinement, love, and beauty.

REST.

To step out of self-life into God-life; to lie still and let Him lift you out of it; to lift your hands and face into the light of God's wisdom; to fold yourself in the folds of His protecting Robes. There you will feel the cooling, soothing, healing power upon your soul; and all the flurry and worry, and the fever that is caused by it will be for ever gone. We must realise that we are not those most important ones, but we are His beloved children, who goes to our Heavenly Father like a child goes to its mother with its broken toy, and all will be mended and made right.

We are not beings that are driven like slaves by the power of God, but we are loved, helped, and coaxed; and when we can see this we shall say, holy, holy, holy, instead of, "Oh, my; how miserable I am!" We shall be happy instead of miserable, confident instead of doubting, and we will love with that love that finds it an honour to serve our brother.

We shall seek the honour of our brother more than for ourselves, and our mission in life will become joyful instead of burdensome. We will feel contented with God's bounty given to us instead of seeing only a little particle here and there; and we will see that it is a privilege to be upon earth, instead of (as the world sees it) in misery. This, my beloved, is true rest, perfect rest, and glorious rest.

THE VEDAS.

"The Vedic literature opens to us a chapter in what has been called the education of the human race, to which we can find no parallel elsewhere."

—MAX MULLER.

HUMILITY.

"Humility is the realisation of your divine nature."

—EDNA L. CARTER.

KNOWLEDGE.

"All knowledge is within ourselves, but it must be called forth by another knowledge." "God is the Teacher of all teachers, because earthly teachers, however great, are limited by time. God is not limited by time. In thinking of the limited, the mind must think of the unlimited. The very fact that man has little knowledge shows to him that God has unlimited knowledge. Knowledge cannot come without a teacher. All knowledge is in man, but certain environments are needed to call it out. Who was the Teacher of teachers? That One of infinite knowledge, the beginningless and endless, Who is called God."

RAJA YOGA.

THE BENEFIT OF SPEECH.

Emerson says:—"Plato says that the punishment which the wise suffers, who refuse to take part in the government, is, to live under the government of worse men; and the like regret is suggested to all auditors, as the penalty of abstaining from speech is that they shall hear worse orators than themselves."

—RALPH WALDO EMERSON.

THE BELIEF IN SPIRITS IN ANCIENT TIMES.

Ancestor worship, as you know, means the belief in the spirits of the departed ancestors, and in the powers which they possess, as well as our constant remembrance of them and our services in their memory, either by following their directions, or by seeking to arouse their sympathy and kindly feelings that they may help us in our distresses and misfortunes in our earthly lives. We find clear traces in every country in the past of this old form of spiritualism. We find it amongst the ancient Egyptians, Babylonians, Chaldeans, Assyrians, Chinese, Parsees, Hindus, and even among the less known human species, such as the American Indian, and the Eskimos in the farthest north, so we see that spiritualism in itself is not of modern origin, but of Ancient times, and that the "Knocks at Rochester" was simply a reappearance of the old experiences with spirits.

In our day it has taken shape more of phenomena than of philosophy in the minds of the masses, as everybody is looking, listening, and feeling for some "friend of mine from the other side."

As this old belief is not only a belief, but facts, and those are founded upon law, there will come to spiritualism the same evolution which will raise it higher in the estimate of the people as is coming to all other cults of old who have just made their first appearance in the modern day. Let us all rise beyond the phenomenal world, and we shall have the great light of their inner power revealed to us.

We cannot perceive the spirit in its divine expression as long as we hold on the phenomenal; but as soon as we are willing to rise higher to find the law and power back of them we shall be startled with such facts as we never looked for as long as we only dealt with the phenomenal.

The belief in spirits in the Ancient times was a religion to the people, which they held so sacred that they would not allow anyone to enter their temple where they worshipped, who had not first purified both their body and mind. Under no consideration would they have communion with their dead Ancestors, unless everybody's mind and body was consecrated to the highest divine purpose and the glory of God. This is the reason why they had such marvellous phenomena as they had, and why they kept their religious faith and practice so very sacred. Let us take their examples, and follow them.

THE VEDANTA MOVEMENT IN THE COLONIES.

The Vedanta in the Colonies is being spread very fast and the inquiry into the teachings is on a constant increase, and the movement as a whole is very rapidly progressing, and as we hear each week from the Secretary of each Vedanta Centre we find that every Centre is doing wonderfully good work, and each is creating as much interest in Vedanta amongst the masses as it is possible for them to do.

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Each centre holds meetings Sundays and Thursdays, at which the public are invited, and the outsiders are taking great interest in the progress of the work. Here, in Melbourne, we have had wonderful meetings, each Sunday evening our hall is packed to overflowing, and in the morning on Sundays we have a very large attendance, considering that there are no trams until the afternoons on Sundays. Some people walk for miles to attend our Sunday morning services. In the week-time we have quite filled houses, and our ladies' meeting on Wednesday afternoon fills the hall to its uttermost, and our classes are very large, and the interest is constantly growing. We shall have a very large Vedanta Club here, and the good work which has been begun here in the interest of Vedanta will be increasing as time passes on. Humanity seeks freedom, humanity seeks light, and there cannot be freedom without light, nor can there be light without freedom. Let every Centre do its utmost in activity, let every member be eager for the opportunity to express their thoughts, as there will come more the power where there is expression; and let no meeting become dull for want of expression. When Vedanta becomes better known and understood amongst the masses there shall be more life, power, and earnestness than any other Cult have been able to manifest amongst us.

MELBOURNE LETTER, MAY 9, 1910.

Beloved Readers of the "Star,"—

In this letter I hope to give you some description of this city. Melbourne is more like the larger cities of America than any other I have seen in the Colonies. The streets are very wide, and the buildings are more modern than in Sydney (of course, the latter city is much older than that of Melbourne). This place has not the harbour which Sydney has, but they have made up for it by little spots of beauty here and there all around; wherever one goes one finds these little reserves, where lovely flowers grow in great profusion, and there being seats one can sit down right in the midst of the busy hours to rest and think.

Here are beautiful gardens, with their different species of palms and uncommon shrubberies, and it is a joy to sit down amongst the green and flowers on the hills and have the lovely views over the city.

Here are great museums, but I have been too hard at work to visit them, but I hope to find time before leaving.

St. Patrick's Cathedral is one of the most beautiful Roman churches I was ever in; the carvings in wood and the wonderful work in Mosaic one can find there is beyond description. If there were the life in the spirit as there is external beauty what a wonderful thing it would be.

The Government buildings are very imposing, and one can see that this part of the Commonwealth is younger in construction, as they are of more modern architecture than in other places. I said I have not had time to take a very careful view of things in the city yet, but we were invited a little while ago by a generous man in this city to take a journey about between thirty and forty miles from the city up to the "Black Spur Mountains" for a day. How I would like to tell the name of this kind soul, but I have no permission to do so, but he is truly like a kind and indulgent "father" to everyone he thinks he can give some comfort and pleasure.

There were six in the company, including our generous host, and we took the train in the morning for some forty miles from the city, at the termination of which we got off the train, and, after enjoying an elaborate breakfast at a hotel, we were to enjoy a ride of some twelve miles

up in the mountains.

We were conveyed in a splendid vehicle, holding seven, with four splendid horses, who looked as happy to pull us up-hill as we were to be pulled, the whole way being through a forest of the most magnificent ferns one could imagine. Wonderful ferns, more ferns, some like mighty fern-trees rising in their glory towards the sky, and every now and then we passed a flowing stream of clear water. I daresay that there cannot be a more wonderful wild growth of large ferns than it is here, and Australia well deserves the name of the "Country with its ferns beyond the seas."

The higher we got, the greater were the depths below us, and we could see better than ever the fern-palaces below us.

It looked rather threatening in the morning to be rain for the day, but it cleared, and the day was perfect; and I never have so enjoyed a day in nature as that day, and I daresay, that when I leave my form I shall have my "hut" amongst those wonderful ferns, and from there send life to all in Australia who wish to partake. There are no feasts like those in nature; there is no expression of the divine as that in nature; and it seems as though humanity has become overgrown "gluttons" in eating and drinking, and thereby have forgotten the power there is to be found in the purity of life. The air one inhales on such a trip is worth a ransom to the body, and the peace the Soul and mind experiences can do more to lift the senses out of their confinement in lower matter than many sermons; and one feels so at home when one understands that man is part of all things, that one can say, "You are my own; how glad I am to be with you"; and all nature will answer the greeting, and say, "Come into my innermost self, and let me feed, enlighten, and refresh you."

The time came when we were at the termination of our trip by stopping at a wonderfully beautiful reserve, called "The Hermitage," where lives a German artist, and he has laid out his premises in all the perfect harmony in the light upon which his Hermitage is built. There are look outs built in the trees, where we climbed and sat down to have the view over the chain of mountains beneath us, and we were all of us delighted to be photographed in a group under one of the very largest ferns at the "Hermitage," and we were presented with some of the photos, which will be to me one of the greatest mementoes I have, because I had a whole day in nature, and I was feasted not only on all kinds of foods and fruits, but upon beauty, and wonder, silence, and inspiration, which have made me more than ever realise the power of seclusion for meditation.

Would that every man understood the language of silence directing the mind in things. We had a lovely trip home; a little thunder shower heightened the impressiveness of the occasion, and it beautifully mingled its tones with the party who were singing in unison one lovely melody after the other, including "God Save the King," "Star Spangled Banner," and several operatic tunes, finishing up with "He is a Jolly Good Fellow," in honour of our most generous host. After an elaborate tea upon our return to the hotel, we took the train for our homes, to bear in lasting memory one of the most glorious trips in nature of our lives. With much love,

SISTER AVABAMIA.

Announcement.—All communications for purchases of Vedanta literature, subscriptions to the "Star of the East," and money orders must be sent to J. S. Warner, P.O. Box 1064, Sydney, Australia.

CLIMAX Lithographers and Printers. 10 Royal Lane, Melbourne.